



NEWS

U.S. Army Research Laboratory

John M. Miller, Director

ARL 04-008
Dave Davison
301-394-2302
ddavison@arl.mil

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Lab Designs and Fabricates Low-Cost, Easy to Install HMMWV Weapons Mount

ADELPHI, MD --The idea for an auxiliary weapons mount on the Army's humvee came from soldiers in the 173rd Airborne Brigade stationed in Italy while anxiously waiting their deployment into either Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom.

Their needs were simple: give us a low-cost, reliable, easy-to-install roof-top mount for HMMWVs that will be a second location on which any one of several weapons can be quickly added or removed.

Their timeframe was not: give it to us yesterday.

This was the problem facing Andrew Ladas, a branch chief in the Army Research Laboratory's Sensors and Electron Devices Directorate. Ladas' branch was tasked because of its expertise in design, engineering and fabrication, as well as their history in responding quickly to soldiers' needs.

Working in-concert with AMC's FAST Activity, which helps to provide materiel rapidly to field soldiers, Ladas and his staff within six months had designed, redesigned, developed a prototype, gotten approval for and begun fabricating 40-pound pieces of cast steel into a wedge-shaped devices that could quickly be bolted on by soldiers in the field.

Their creation eventually came to be known as the HMMWV Auxiliary Weapons Mount – or HAWM, for short. Nearly 90 of the mounts have already been delivered and installed on units in Baghdad, including some from Maryland's National Guard.

Four different weapons can be secured to a HAWM: three increasingly more powerful machine guns and a grenade launcher.

For the soldier in the field, the payoff was immediate. Not only did the HAWM now give soldiers a range of vehicle-mounted weaponry for their protection, it also helps to distribute more evenly the weight from any other weapon already mounted on a HMMWV. More evenly distributed weight allows the gun turret to turn more easily.

"We've used the mount in combat and it's already saved lives," reports soldiers in the 173rd.

For Ladas and others in his branch who worked on the HAWM, that acknowledgement is all the reward they need.

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Caption Photo – Some 90 gun mounts have been delivered and installed on vehicles being used in Iraq, thanks to the quick response of ARL.